

# Assessment in the Early Years

## Supplementary Resource Materials

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# Defining Assessment Terminology

**Assessment** is the process of gathering evidence about a student's knowledge of, ability to use, and disposition towards a discipline, and of making inferences from that evidence for a variety of purposes.

**Evaluation** refers to the process of determining the worth of or assigning value to something on the basis of careful examination and judgment.

Pre-Assessment/Diagnostic Assessment:

Formative Assessment:

Summative Assessment:

Assessment IS Learning:

Assessment for Learning:

Assessment of Learning:

## Assessment vs. Activities

| Thinking Like an Assessor  | Thinking Like an Activity Designer   |
|--|--|
| What would be sufficient and revealing evidence of understanding of the central idea and lines of inquiry?                             | What would be interesting and engaging activities on this topic?                 |
| What performance tasks must anchor the unit and focus the instructional work in order to unwrap the central idea and lines of inquiry? | What resources and materials are available on this topic?                        |
| How will we be able to distinguish between those who really understand and those who don't though they may seem to?                    | What will students be doing in and out of class? What assignments will be given? |
| Against what criteria will we distinguish the work and assess the level of quality?  | How will I give students a grade and justify it to their parents?                |
| What misunderstandings are likely?<br>How will I check for those?  | Did the activities work? Why or why not?   |

Adapted from *Understanding by Design*, McTighe and Wiggins, ASCD, 1999



## A shift to the PYP view on Assessment

| Decreased emphasis on:  | Increased emphasis on:  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viewing planning, teaching and assessing as isolated processes</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viewing planning, teaching and assessing as interconnected processes</li> </ul>                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over-reliance on one assessment strategy</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using a range and balance of assessment strategies</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viewing assessment as the sole prerogative of the teacher</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involving students in peer and self assessment</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking student responses solely to identify the right answer</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking student responses in order to understand their current conceptions</li> </ul>                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concluding each unit only by summative testing</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involving the students in shared reflections at the end of each unit</li> </ul>                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embarking on new learning before assessing the levels of students' current knowledge and experience</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing the levels of students' current knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating units in isolation from other teachers</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating collaboratively using an agreed, flexible system</li> </ul>   |

## 5 Features of Documentation

1. *Documentation involved a specific question that guides the process, often with an epistemological focus.*
2. *Documentation involves collectively analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating individual or group observations; it is strengthened by multiple perspectives*
3. *Documentation makes use of multiple languages (different ways of representing and expressing thinking in various media and symbol systems).*
4. *Documentation makes learning visible; it is not private.*  
*Documentation becomes public when it is shared back with learners – whether children, parents, or teachers.*
5. *Documentation is not only retrospective; it is also prospective. It shapes the design of future contexts for learning.*

# Documentation and Conversations

## Documentation

Documentation is a term used to describe a holistic way of recording young children's learning that was pioneered by the educators in Reggio Emilia. It may include, but is not limited to, transcripts of dialogue, videos, audio, photographs and graphic representations. It is particularly relevant in informal early childhood settings. Documentation is often actively shared with the children, parents and the wider community. As we replay the video or audio or look more closely at a photograph it might make it clearer who, for example, is doing well in a group, who needs support and who is supporting others. In this way, documentation allows us to reflect more deeply upon what children are learning and how we can best support them.

## Conversations

Observations of younger children often lead to conversations that enable us to get to know more about the child's world and gain greater insights into their understanding. Educators, for example, engage young children in conversations when they are drawing and sometimes scribe what they have said. Because young children usually can't write detailed reflections about their learning, educators also ask them about what they have been involved in, what they have learned and what they would like to do.

Likewise, children converse with each other and make connections with what they already know, as well as identify new possibilities for investigation and exploration. As Kathy Short, Jerome Harste and Carolyn Burke have written, "knowledge, formerly considered static, is now seen as socially constructed", so conversation allows the children to "wander and wonder" and to find their way. We as educators can also join these conversations, as children seek new knowledge.

Source: Ways to Assess Learning Through Inquiry (IB publication: Ways to learn through inquiry: Guiding Children to Deeper Understanding by Jo Fahey, 2012)

## Documentation Features in Practice

What are some ideas to keep in mind as we begin to move from the idea of documentation towards the use of it to support learning in groups? From capturing and interpreting jotted notes of student conversations to creating highly polished visual essays, documenting involves much more than making products. It involves identifying and making sense of the learning experience, and then using new insights to guide future teaching and learning. Here we provide a sense of how the features of documentation relate to this day-to-day practice.

**1. Documentation involves a specific question that guides the process, often with an epistemological focus (focus on questions of learning).**

- Articulating a question--usually with a focus on how children build knowledge--can guide how and what to document and keep it connected to student learning.
- Formulating a question helps to focus and limit data collection and sharpens the analysis.
- Identifying hypotheses (forecasts), as well as questions, can be very helpful in advancing teachers' thinking and structuring observations around a particular question.



**2. Documentation involves collectively analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating individual and group observations; it is strengthened by multiple perspectives.**

- Documentation does not stop with the photograph or tape recording or written notes. The next and critical step is analyzing and interpreting this documentation.
- Collaborating with a partner or partners reduces the subjectivity of a single person's analysis and interpretation.
- Collective analysis deepens the individual's and the group's understanding of a learning experience.



**3. Documentation makes use of multiple languages (different ways of representing and expressing thinking in various media and symbol systems).**

- Using multiple forms of documentation (e.g., words and pictures) deepens the understanding of a learning experience.
- Photographs are especially effective for capturing emotional or social dimensions.
- Student reflections and adult analysis of key moments of learning add new layers of meaning.



**4. Documentation makes learning visible; it is not private. Documentation becomes public when it is shared with learners, whether children, parents, or teachers.**

- Publicly sharing documentation allows children and adults to reflect on, evaluate, and build on their previous work and ideas.
- Sharing documentation with learners can take many forms: a photocopied sheet of paper, words repeated back to students, work brought back to a small group or put up on a wall, a carefully arranged panel, or a formal presentation.
- Protocols can be useful for structuring conversations about documentation that promote deeper understanding.
- Documentation is an act of communication; it makes public a conversation about what we value.



**5. Documentation is not only retrospective, it is also prospective. It shapes the design of future contexts for learning.**

- Analyzing and interpreting documentation leads teachers to compare what they thought they would observe or would happen to what really went on; it informs decisions about where to go next.
- Documentation helps teachers stay close to students' learning and interests as they think about next steps in the learning process.
- Reviewing documentation influences curriculum in terms of the amount of time a group spends on a topic and the level of student involvement in shaping an activity or unit.

*Photographs by (from top to bottom): Terri Turner, MLV Research Assistant; Melissa Rivard, MLV Documentation Specialist; Danikka Giarratani, MLV Seminar Member; Melissa Rivard, MLV Documentation Specialist*

Source: Making Learning Visible, Harvard Project Zero  
<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/mlv/index983a.html>



# Check it Out! A Checklist for Central Ideas & Lines of Inquiry



**Before you begin to develop an excellent summative assessment you would be wise to vet your *Central Idea* and *Lines of Inquiry* using a checklist!**

## **A Central Idea...**

- is worth knowing
- is true and or valid
- is not value laden
- is globally transportable
- can be studied at any age
- has a degree of complexity
- has a degree of ambiguity that promotes uncoverage and/or discovery
- is written as a statement without proper nouns and in the present tense

## **Lines of Inquiry...**

- are worth knowing
- are true and or valid
- are not value laden
- help to expand the central idea
- are not obvious or simply knowledge
- can be adjusted for age appropriateness
- have a degree of ambiguity that promotes uncoverage and/or discovery
- are written to complete the sentence *An Inquiry into . . .*

# Approaches to Communicating Student Learning

## From report cards to portfolios

There is growing emphasis on communicating the results of performance forms of assessment, complemented by better and more appropriate reporting systems. This moves communicating student learning beyond basic academic skills to embrace other essential competencies in problem solving, higher-order thinking skills, interpersonal skills and teamwork.

A variety of communicating practices have been created for inclusion in school communication plans to clearly communicate student accomplishments and to advise students of the next steps to be taken in the instructional process. The diversity of communication practices parallels the variety in assessment practices necessary to determine the performance levels of students with greatest validity and reliability.

Practices for communicating student learning may include:

- ü phone calls (positive as well as negative)
- ü home response journals (three-way communication journals for regular dialogue between student, parent and teacher)
- ü newsletters
- ü individual program plans (IPP)
- ü home video ( a videotape of class activities circulated among the homes of the students)
- ü portfolios
- ü student self-evaluation
- ü goal setting
- ü student-led conferences
- ü open classroom (periodic, student-planned, evening open houses)
- ü celebrations of learning
- ü report cards
- ü homework hotline (a voice-mail system with pre-recorded messages and messages that may be recorded)

Adapted from Reporting Student Progress. Video and Facilitator's Guide. ASCD: Alexandria, VA 1996

## Effective Report Cards

Retrieved from the Alberta Assessment Consortium website:  
[http://www.aac.ab.ca/framework\\_Red/framework\\_Red\\_approach.html](http://www.aac.ab.ca/framework_Red/framework_Red_approach.html)

Report cards are central to the reporting process. "Today's report card celebrates learning. It tells the parent and child what the child can do." (Armstrong. 1990)

Report cards should be based on the curriculum and aligned with programming, assessment and the school philosophy. Since report cards communicate many messages, they must be designed carefully. The amount of space assigned to a particular course suggests its importance to the school. Too much information is confusing for parents; too little doesn't tell them enough.

J. McTighe observed that clearly defined reporting standards are necessary to increase the communication value of a reporting document. According to McTighe, reporting documents should distinguish between the following factors:

- **achievement**  $\frac{3}{4}$  performance relative to identified learning outcomes based on collected evidence and judged against established criteria
- **progress**  $\frac{3}{4}$  degree of growth toward mastery of the learning outcomes, based on a performance continuum
- **work habits**  $\frac{3}{4}$  includes effort, completion of assignments, behaviour and attendance

McTighe also noted that each of these factors should be reported separately.

The *School Act* does not specifically address report cards. The *Alberta Education Guide to Education* includes the requirement to report student learning on a regular basis.

### **An effective reporting document**

- promotes a student's feelings of success and positive self-worth
- encourages further student learning
- promotes home-school communication
- provides a context for judgements
- is clearly understood by students and parents
- provides information on student achievement and growth
- is aligned to provincial curriculum standards
- tells what individual students know and can do
- ensures that the mark awarded is an accurate and current reflection of student learning
- factors out elements not related to the curriculum, or not reflective of the student's typical achievement level
- acknowledges actions that need to be taken by partners in learning - students, parents and teachers

### **An ineffective reporting document**

- leaves the student feeling inadequate
- is viewed as an endpoint
- provides only one-way communication
- reports numbers in isolation from learning
- includes a confusing assortment of codes, numbers and jargon
- provides only sorting and ranking information
- is based on inconsistent grading scales and criteria with little similarity from classroom to classroom
- tells only what the teacher has taught
- shows an over-reliance on averaging to come up with the final mark
- includes non-academic factors such as effort, behaviour, and attendance as part of the student's mark

- blames other for poor student performance

## Effective Conferencing

The main purpose of a formal conference is to establish communication links between students, parents and teachers. Conferencing provides explanations and insights into teacher evaluations, student progress and the grade level achieved. Conferencing also gives parents an opportunity to share their perspectives on their child's performance, needs, interests and concerns.

Formal conferences should be pre-planned and organized so that there are no surprises for any of the participants. The teacher must establish the parameters of the conference and explain the role of each participant. Students should have opportunities to practise conferencing during classroom activities so that they are prepared to engage in the discussion. Parents must know what is expected of them during the conferencing process, and they also must be able to ask questions. Through conferencing, the parental role in the educational process becomes more clearly defined, and the parents are more likely to value this process as a means of finding out what their child knows and can do.

As Stiggins noted at the National Conference on Standards and Assessment in April 1999, "Student-led parent conferences are considered to be the breakthrough of the century as a path to greater student motivation and achievement."

### **An effective conference**

- includes the student as an active participant
- uses student products to demonstrate achievement and growth
- focuses clearly on individual student learning and includes specific strategies for improvement
- expands upon the information provided in the report card
- engages all participants in discussing achievement and setting goals
- includes a discussion of the successes and difficulties the student is experiencing
- provides an opportunity for open and relevant sharing of information between participants
- establishes an atmosphere in which everyone feels welcome to participate
- provides information about curriculum
- includes an action plan that is supportive of student learning
- ends on a positive note

### **An ineffective conference**

- excludes the student from the conversation
- expects parents to accept that "expert opinion" is sufficient justification for judgements
- provides little or no insight into how to increase student learning
- repeats the same information as the report card
- provides few ideas about what the student has done, can or could do
- focuses only on what the student can't or won't do

- is dominated by one participant who does most of the talking
- conveys to the parent the idea that keeping to the scheduled time is more important than sharing information
- deals primarily with non-academic issues
- provides little or no direction about what each participant is to do by the next reporting period
- ends with parents and/or students being frustrated and discouraged

## Effective Portfolios

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that provides a visual representation of a student's learning. The samples of work in a portfolio record growth and achievement in one or more subject areas over time. Although there are no rigid guidelines as to what should be included in a portfolio, selections should be representative samples that really reflect the child.

### **An effective portfolio**

- is a planned and organized collection of student work
- tells detailed stories about a variety of student outcomes that would otherwise be difficult to document
- includes self-reflections that describe the student as both a learner and an individual
- serves as a guide for future learning by illustrating a student's present level of achievement
- includes a selection of items that representative of curriculum outcomes and what the student knows and can do
- includes the criteria against which the student work was judged
- supports the assessment, evaluation and communication of student learning
- documents learning in a variety of ways  $\frac{3}{4}$  process, product, growth and achievement

### **An ineffective portfolio**

- is a random collection of student work, undated and unrelated
- is uni-dimensional with an overabundance of knowledge and recall activities
- shows little evidence of the student's participation in the learning process
- acts as a repository for student work that is never revisited
- includes work representing only a narrow slice of curriculum
- provides no guidelines to assist the reader in interpreting judgements
- is not an integral part of the student's learning and is viewed as an "add on" by the teacher
- provides a snapshot in time with little connection to what has come before or what is to follow

## Portfolio Assessment

### ***Why Portfolios? Some key points about Portfolio Assessment***

- Children invest their work with meaning, understanding, and purpose – at least as long as they feel their work is being considered for those qualities.
- Careful examination of the things children make in school – the pictures, the stories, journals, maps, performances, etc. – provides a view into the individual child and the learning environment.
- A longitudinal view of a child's work provides a picture of growth, progress, and continuity over time.
- Portfolios provide an opportunity for assessment based on direct evidence of a child's effort – not a list of test scores.

*The Project Zero Classroom Portfolio Strand*

## What is a Portfolio?

### ***Portfolios are a purposeful collection to show growth***

A portfolio is a collection of children's work which tells a story of what the child is learning and how that learning is taking place. The collection comes from classroom engagements, journeys, formative and summative assessments.

### ***Portfolios show what the child can do and understand***

Portfolios track the process through which a child reaches decisions, forms hypotheses and solves problems. With portfolios, the emphasis is on performance. The materials in a portfolio document the skills and concepts a child has acquired.

### ***Portfolios match assessment with how children learn***

Children learn best by doing and need to be active participants in meaningful contexts. The child-centered approach is enhanced when teachers view children's learning through expanding portfolios.

### ***Portfolios reflect the process of learning***

Every child learns by being actively engaged in the world. Teachers help children in the process of becoming readers, writers, problem solvers, scientists and artists. Through portfolios, teachers can document each child's successful growth in the learning process.

### ***Portfolios benefit children***

Traditional assessment focused more on what children could not do rather than on what they could do. With portfolios, children are evaluated on their past achievements and their own potential. Thus, children are more likely to see themselves as competent, successful learners.

### ***Portfolios contain:***

- Actual examples of student work that have been done as part of the ongoing classroom engagements

- Some represents a child's 'best' work, others may show growth or challenges
- Collections can include writing samples, photographs, records of teacher observations, checklists and conference reports
- Work selected by both the teacher and the student; parent contributions may also be considered – it is important that the child feel ownership for the portfolio

## **Portfolio Conferences**

Teachers meet with students frequently to discuss the child's progress. Children are encouraged to reflect upon their own work. Parents can also be involved in meetings to review portfolio contents. This can be in the form of a parent-teacher-student meeting, or a student led conference which incorporates portfolios into the discussion. The intent is to demonstrate the child's progress, focus on strengths and celebrate successes. The group is able to exchange information, address problems and set new goals.

## **Considering Portfolios**

Following are some guiding questions to consider when implementing portfolio assessment:

**What is the purpose for the portfolio?** Will all subjects be included? Will the portfolio include 'polished' (edited, published, revised) work only, or will it also be used to demonstrate the journey of the process, (drafts, revisions, reflections, etc.)? Will it include 'best work' only, or also selections that weren't so favoured?

**Will the portfolio represent one year of student work, or will it be a cumulative collection that is passed from one teacher to the next?** How will they be shared?

**Who will contribute to the portfolio?** Students? Teachers? Parents?

**How will you establish criteria for portfolio development?** How will material be chosen? Will written reflections be included? Will students need to be able to speak to each selection they have made? Will assessment feedback be included?

**What will your portfolio look like?** Will you use binders, scrapbooks, folders, commercial portfolio with clear pockets, a pizza box, or an accordion file?

**What will be included in portfolios?** Here are a few suggestions – what can you add to the list?

- Questions, issues, brainstorm, notes from research projects, planning records
- Sketches, mind maps, semantic maps
- Photographs
- Rough drafts, works in progress
- Published books, essays, reflections
- Peer and teacher feedback
- Self reflections and self evaluations
- Writing samples
- Lists of books students have read (with or without comments from the student)
- Audio-clips of the student reading

- digital presentations (Powerpoint, Keynote, etc.)
- Miscue analysis
- Personal reactions to classroom experiences
- And many more!



**How will students review and add to their portfolios?** How will you schedule time to ensure this process is honoured? Will you allow for time to conference with students periodically? How will students share portfolios with their parents (student-led conference, three way conference, students' taking the portfolio home periodically)?

**How will you incorporate effective goal setting and allow for effective assessment of the goals?** Will you set the curricular and instructional goals for the student? Will you negotiate the goals with students individually or as a group? Will parents have a say?



## Implementing Portfolio Use

Once you've reached some decisions about the role of portfolios in your classroom, you need next to consider the process of implementation. Following the lead of Tierney, Carter and Desai (1991), here's one possible way to put portfolios into practice.

1. The criteria for assessment and portfolio development are ideally negotiated and agreed upon between students and teachers; parents may also be invited to state their educational goals for their children and these may be incorporated as well.
2. Students begin to build and organize portfolios, using the agreed upon criteria for selection and self-evaluation. Students may include a completed self-evaluation with each selected piece and what it reveals about their abilities as readers, writers, or learners, or they can write a brief statement noting the same points.
3. At the end of the grading period, students review their portfolios, write an evaluative summary detailing what they view as their strengths and future goals ("Things I do well...", Things I am working on... or Two Stars and a Wish (2 positives, 1 wish). The summary and portfolio are submitted to the teacher.
4. The teacher conducts an evaluative conference with each student (parents may be included too) and together they review the portfolio and the student's self-evaluative comments and summary. The teacher shares his or her assessment of the portfolio and together the student and teacher agree upon the next course of action – what goals the student should focus on next and how he or she should go about achieving those goals.
5. The teacher then writes a narrative summary of the conference and what his or her curricular and instructional strategies are for the student.



# Helping Students Understand the Language of the Rubric

## The Challenge

*The qualitative language of a rubric can cause challenges for teachers, students and parents.*

- Teachers want to achieve consistency in marking.
- Students often have difficulty understanding the language of a rubric.
- Parents often wonder what teachers mean by the complex language in a rubric.

## A False Solution

*Some have suggested that the use of quantitative descriptors can alleviate the problem. However, unless quantity is embedded with the learner outcome, it is inappropriate to use quantity to measure performance.*

- Why are quantitative measures problematic?
- So then what can we do?

## A More Effective Solution

*Develop a shared understanding between teacher and students of what quality looks like. Benefits include:*

- Helps students describe the elements of quality; in essence, set criteria
- Helps students take ownership for their learning
- Enhances vocabulary development
- Transfers to other learning contexts



## Sources of Assessment Evidence: Self Assessment

Directions: Use the following scale to rate your "level of use" of each of the following assessment tools (at the classroom, school or district level). What do the survey results suggest? What patterns do you notice? Are you collecting appropriate evidence for *all* the desired results, or only those that are easiest to test and grade? Is an important learning goal "falling through the cracks" because it is not being assessed?

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>5 = Extensive Use</b>      |
| <b>4 = Frequent Use</b>       |
| <b>3 = General Use</b>        |
| <b>2 = Sporadic Use</b>       |
| <b>1 = Infrequent Use</b>     |
| <b>0 = No Evidence of Use</b> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | 1. Selected-response format (e.g., multiple-choice, true-false) quizzes and tests |
|  | 2. Written response to academic prompts (short-answer format)                     |
|  | 3. Extended written products (e.g., essays, lab reports)                          |
|  | 4. Visual products (e.g., PowerPoint show, mural)                                 |
|  | 5. Oral performances (e.g., oral report, foreign language dialogues)              |
|  | 6. Student demonstrations (e.g., skill performance in p.e.)                       |
|  | 7. Long-term, 'authentic' assessment projects (e.g., senior exhibit)              |
|  | 8. Portfolios – collections of student work over time                             |
|  | 9. Reflective journals or Learning logs   |
|  | 10. Informal, on-going observations of students                                   |
|  | 11. Formal observations of students using observable indicators or criterion list |
|  | 12. Student self-assessments  |
|  | 13. Peer reviews and peer response groups   |
|  | 14. Other: _____  |

Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*. 2002



## Viewing Guide

|   | What is the teacher doing? | What are the students doing? | Where are the assessment opportunities? | What are your thoughts? |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 |                            |                              |   |                         |
| 2 |                            |                              |   |                         |
| 3 |                            |                              |   |                         |
| 4 |                            |                              |   |                         |
| 5 |                            |                              |   |                         |
| 6 |                            |                              |   |                         |

Additional thoughts?

## How to Recognize a Complex Performance Task in 10 Easy Steps!

|   | Yes | + or - | No |
|---|-----|--------|----|
| Does it allow for multiple solutions and multiple entry points?                     |     |        |    |
| Will every student be able to participate?  |     |        |    |
| Does it call for the use of more than one sense?                                    |     |        |    |
| Does it require the use of several kinds of media as source material?               |     |        |    |
| Does it require multiple skills and behaviors?                                      |     |        |    |
| Does it check for understanding rather than memorization or regurgitation of facts? |     |        |    |
| Does it require a range of group process skills?                                    |     |        |    |
| Does it require reading and writing?  |     |        |    |
| Is it significant, challenging, and engaging?                                       |     |        |    |
| Does it allow for expressions of the Learner Profile?                               |     |        |    |

Adapted from Elizabeth Cohen's ***Designing Groupwork for the Heterogeneous Classroom***, Columbia University, New York, 1994.

# Student-Involved Assessment



1. Have students think aloud or write out steps when problem solving.
2. Ask students to challenge each other's reasoning.
3. Offer students repeated opportunities to develop assessment exercises that tap different kinds of reasoning.
4. Pose questions that require more complete thought and communication.
5. Use concept mapping to analyze analytical reasoning proficiency.
6. Have students develop and apply scoring criteria to evaluate responses. This builds evaluative reasoning of critical thinking.
7. Ask students to paraphrase each other's responses and to add to each other's responses.
8. Have students keep reflection journals in which they describe the effectiveness of their reasoning and problem solving.
9. Involve students in the process of analyzing incorrect answers to multiple choice items by identifying flawed reasoning that makes each incorrect.
10. Have students build portfolios that show their growth in reasoning complexity and the problems they can solve.

***Student Involved Classroom Assessment***, Richard Stiggins (2001)

# Why inquiry-based learning?

## 10 quick points from research

1. Inquiry is universal. **It is unlikely that there exists a community in which children do not engage with inquiry...** when we recognise the depths of inquiry purpose in every human life" (Lindfors)
2. The function of inquiry is to **go beyond the known**. (Often beyond what the children and teachers know.) Inquiry enhances learning.
3. The **early years are crucial** for determining whether the child will become a passive learner or an active learner who gains new information by discovery and invention
4. Inquiry weaves the social, intellectual and the personal; the three complementary urges that **make us human**.
5. The process of inquiry **connects us to others** (inquiry acts as discourse) to create understanding of the world around us.
6. To honour the child's inquiry is to **honour the child** as an active, initiating, constructive and capable learner.
7. Inquiry uses **knowledge as an action** not as a destination.
8. In inquiry tasks children are both **problem solvers and problem posers**. Inquiry involves different kinds of learning and occurs in classrooms that are democratic. (Kathy Short)
9. Inquiry moves children's learning from shallow to deep. **It is rooted in real life experience**. Make it as real as possible. (Kath Murdoch)
10. Inquiry is a universal experience. Teachers must be inquirers too. **We must allow ourselves to let go of control and stop thinking for the children**. Inquire together and co-research with your children and colleagues.

## Misconceptions

- Inquiry is too complex for young learners
- Inquiry is a fancy name for doing research
- Inquiry should last for a long time
- In an inquiry classroom the teacher does not need to teach
- Inquiry is really the same as integrated thematic units of study

## Inquiry needs:

- Authentic contexts for learning
- Balance of initiation between children and teachers
- Timetables that support the child's learning with large blocks of time
- Teachers who can take many roles
- An environment that supports the process
- Collaboration between individuals

# Observation Tool

Student:  
Date:  
Context:

| Time | Observations, Dialogue, Inquiries |
|------|-----------------------------------|
|      |                                   |



# Observation Tool for Multiple Children

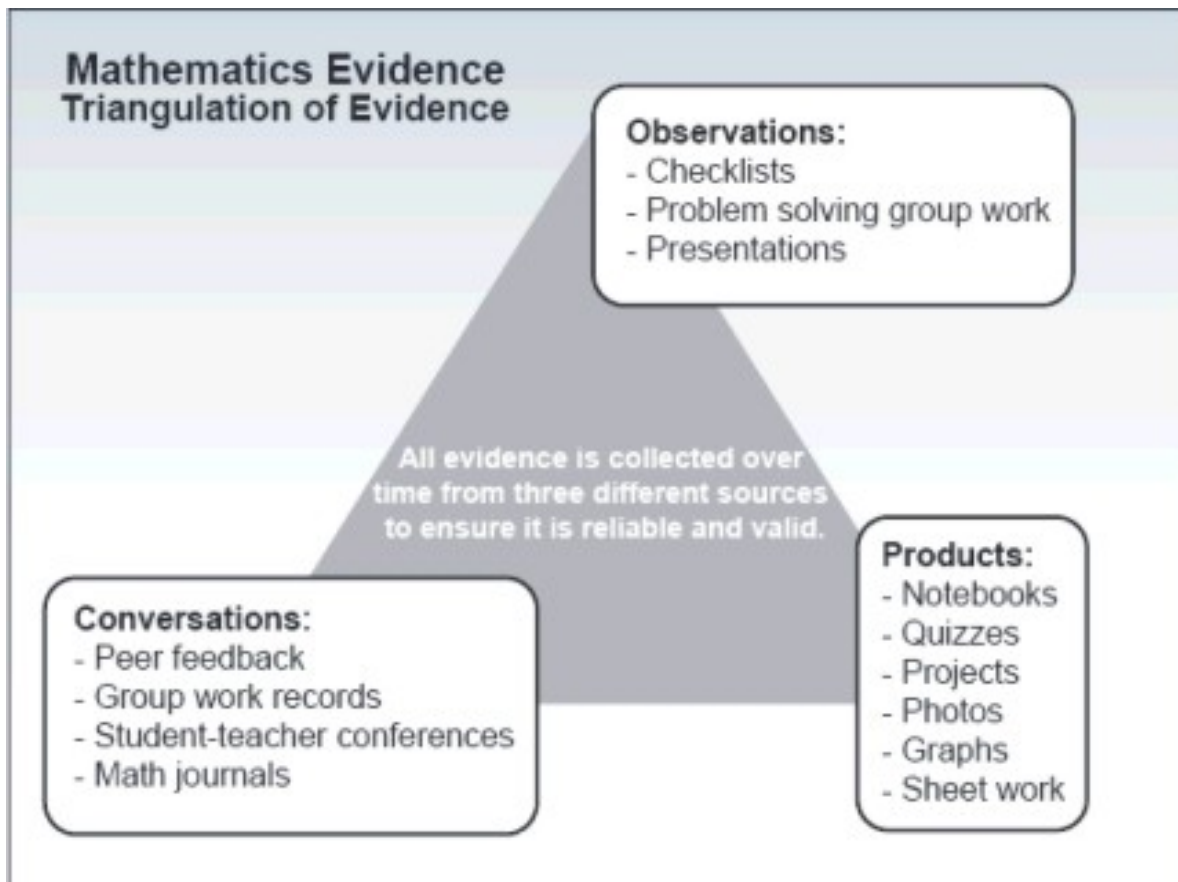
Children:  
Date:  
Context:

| Time | Observations, Dialogue, Inquiries |       |
|------|-----------------------------------|-------|
|      | Name:                             | Name: |
|      |                                   |       |

# Triangulating Assessment Evidence

Anne Davies, researcher, writer and educational consultant, has supported the concept of triangulating assessment evidence through use of multiple sources of data.

The following example reflects a math perspective:



Observations:

Conversations:

Triangulation  
of  
Assessment  
Evidence

Products:

# PLAY IS LEARNING

## When Your Child Builds With Blocks



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He learns how to use his imagination to create something from his own thinking.

He has the satisfaction of being able to make something.

He learns about sizes and shapes, weights, balances, height and depth, smoothness and roughness.

He is exercising his body.

He is learning to play with others.

## When Your Child Paints



She is more concerned with the process she is going through than her finished product. This is as it should be for this stage of development.

She learns about colors and how she can use them.

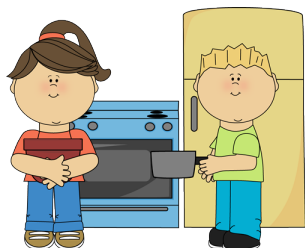
She learns to use her imagination and transfers her ideas to paper.

She gets emotional satisfaction from being able to express herself.

She learns how to use small muscle coordination to handle a brush.

She learns to make choices and decisions.

## When Your Child Plays in the Housekeeping Corner



He learns what the roles of mothers and fathers and children are.

He understands what it feels like to play at being somebody other than himself.

He learns how to use his imagination.

He learns to cooperate with other children.

## When Your Child Plays in the Art and Writing Center



She learns how to use materials like scissors and paste.

She learns how to use her imagination to make the kind of product she has in mind.

Once again the process, not the finished product, is important to her.

She learns about shapes, sizes, colors, and textures.

## When Your Child Plays on the Outdoor Equipment



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He learns how to use his body effectively.

He experiences joy in achieving a skill.

He has fun and relaxation to be found in bodily movement.

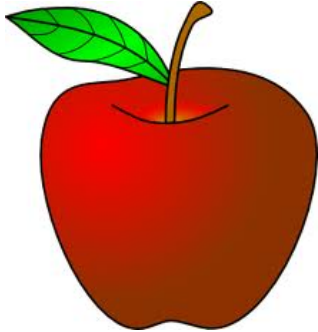
He learns the limitations of his body.

He learns safety and caution.

He learns to take turns and to share a piece of equipment.

## Learning Partners

**Apple**



**Partner:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Stationary**



**Partner:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Report Cards**



**Partner:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Love for Kids**



**Partner:** \_\_\_\_\_